MERRIMACK MISCELLANY.

BY AARON ALLWORTHY & Co.

"NULLIUS ADDICTUS JURARE IN VERBA MAGISTRI."

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PROSPECTUS.

THE plan of this work is intended to be similar, in most respects, to other Literary Periodical Publications, now conducted with success, in various parts of our County. The publisher hopes to combine, in suitable proportion, entertainment with instruction; and to present such variety of knowledge and rational amusement, as will interest and improve all classes of people. The various pursuits and tastes of the Farmer, the Mechanic and the Merchant, the Professional Man and the Scholar, will all be consulted; improvements in agriculture, ingenious mechanical inventions, and speculations relating to Commerce, Literature and the Arts, will be alike objects of attention. Nor will the Fair Sex be forgotten or neglected. The improvement of their minds, and the useful occupation of their time are of essential importance to society. The promiscuous reading of novels, "made of such stuff as dreams are," so common, at the present day, with both sexes, cannot but be pernicious to the youthful mind. Accustomed to the meretricious lures of fiction, the mind loses all relish for the charms of truth; it prefers the fantastic visions of a sickly imagination to correct delineations of real life; and the instructive volumes of history and biography are thus neglected for the more fascinating pages of romance. The Merrimack Miscellany, it is hoped, may not be unseasonable, as a partial substitute for this kind of reading. Historical and biographical sketches, descriptions from nature, chaste effusions of fancy and wit, literary essays, select letters from the correspondence of distinguished writers, together with ingenious lucubrations of the philosopher, moralist and divine, cannot fail, in the most agreeable manner, to beguile the attention from

"Dreams, magic terrors, spells of mighty power,
"Witches and ghosts, who rose at midnight hour."

To accomplish the plan, he has now sketched, the publisher depends not on himself, nor wholly on the aid of literary friends, though he will ever very gratefully receive any communications or assistance from them. He is sensible that no work of the kind he contemplates, can be ably supported, in this country, entirely from native resources, or original communications. He intends, therefore, to be furnished with the best English and American periodical publications, and with the aid of Gentlemen of judgment and taste, to select from them such parts, as may be least known, and most acceptable to his readers. In this way he expects to be able to present them, at a very moderate price, with the substance of works, too expensive, and too voluminous, for general circulation or perusal. No one, he apprehends, will object to this mode of conducting the publication, or be displeased with what is both new and valuable, because not produced among ourselves. Truth, taste and beauty, depend not on time or place. They charm alike in all climates and all ages; and what has given instruction and delight on the banks of the Thames or the Delaware, cannot fail to do the same on the borders of the Merrimack.

With these promises and prospects, the Merrimack Miscellany now presents itself to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Newburyport and the vicinity, and most respectfully solicits their attention and patronage. Devoted to literature and virtue, to elegant amusement and solid instruction, it relies, with confidence, on their taste and judgment, and anticipates success from their approbation and generous encouragement.

Newburyport, June 1805.

From the Port Folio.

BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF PASCAL.

Blaise Pascal was born at Clermont, in the province of Auvergne, on the 19th of June, 1623. He was descended from an ancient family, and the son of Stephen Pascal, and Antoinette Begon. His mother died in 1626.

He was one of the most remarkable examples of genius discovered in early infancy, and his father, who was himself a man of learning, and particularly skilled in the mathematics, in the year 1631, sold his office of president of the court of aids, and went to reside at Paris, for the purpose of devoting himself entirely to the education of his children.

Duly sensible of the value and importance of the ancient languages, he was desirous of confining the attention of his son to them alone, until he should become a complete master of them. But young Pascal, when in his 12th year, having heard some mention of the *mathematics*, manifested a wish to enter upon the study of them. The reluctance of the father to comply with this wish, served but to inflame his curiosity. He renewed his intreaties, and finding them still unsuccessful, could obtain, finally, nothing more than a mere definition of the science, with a positive injunction neither to say, nor think any more upon the subject. The definition, given by the old gentleman, was, that the mathematics were the *science of drawing exact figures, and of finding their relative proportions.*

Upon the strength of this definition alone, we are told, that young Pascal went to work, without the assistance of any book, and, by the mere force of his own genius, during his hours of leisure from other studies, pushed his discoveries as far as the 32d proposition of the first book of Euclid; when his father, detecting him in his clandestine exercises, and filled with astonishment at the progress he had made, was at once convinced of the impossibility of shackling his transcendant genius, and immediately put an Euclid into his hands, which young Pascal mastered with a facility almost intuitive.

The authenticity of this anecdote has never been called in question. Yet, in the manner it is related by all the biographers of Pascal, it borders too much upon the marvellous to obtain implicit belief. The propositions of Euclid are not connected together by such a chain of necessary dependence upon one another, that the operations of a mind, acting by its own energies, could possibly follow them by a course of mathematical deduction. The thirty-second proposition of the first book, is itself a complicated theorem, containing two distinct though connected demonstrations; and if we can assent to the possibility that Pascal should have made the discovery that the three internal angles of a triangle, are always equal to two right angles, we must at least reject, as fabulous, the remainder of the story. The powers of genius might unveil to the youthful student some of the propositions, of which the demonstration was contained in the first book of Euclid; but they never could have given him the key to the artificial and in some sort arbitrary method of that author.

It is at least certain that this extraordinary story was not told of an ordinary

man. From the time when his father discovered his secret studies, and took off the restraint, which perhaps had made them his darling pursuit, he continued his application to the mathematics, with a passion unabated even by indulgence, and at the age of sixteen, composed a treatise upon Conic Sections, which was considered as a master-piece; but which he esteemed himself of so little importance, that it never was published. This was seen and examined by Descartes, and appeared to that great mathematician, so much beyond the possible powers of sixteen, that he never would believe young Pascal was the real author, and always supposed it the production of the father himself.

In 1638, the father was sent into Normandy, with the office of intendant in that Province, where he resided about ten years. There, young Pascal continued his indefatigable application, with a success proportioned to the uncommon promise of his infancy, though at the usual expense of intense study, disease, and infirmity. At nineteen, he invented, a machine, ever since well known in France by the name of the Pascaline machine, by means of which every sort of arithmetical calculation can be mechanically performed without any knowledge of arithmetic. For this machine he obtained a patent, or exclusive privilege from the King of France, in 1649.

In 1643, Torricelli made his famous experiments, ascertaining that mercury in a tube, hermetically sealed, will not rise beyond a certain height. An observation, which, with respect to water, had before that time been made by Galileo. The Torricellian experiments were communicated to Pascal in 1646, he immediately repeated them, and after fully meditating the subject, published in 1647, a short treatise, which was soon circulated among all scientific men, in every part of Europe, and first ascertained the possibility of a *vacuum*, which until then had been universally considered in the schools of natural philosophy, as the *abhorrence of nature*. During several years, Pascal continued his researches on this subject, repeating and multiplying his experiments, the result of which he published in two successive treatises, on the *equilibrium of fluids*, and on the *weight of the air*. Works which entitle him to the honour of having first demonstated to the satisfaction of the learned world, that all the phenomena, till then attributed to the *horror of a vacuum*, are imputable only to the weight of the atmosphere.

Unfortunately for the fame of this illustrious man, and for the improvement of mankind, in science; to which he was so richly qualified to contribute, an accident which happened to his father, about this time, led to circumstances which withdrew his ardent, and indefatigable mind, from any further application to worldly science, and plunged him headlong into the abyss of metaphysical theology and frantic superstition. It happened that the too famous controversies between the Jansenists and the Jesuits, on the subject of grace, free-will, predestination, and all those interminable questions, which according to Milton, perplex the intellect of the devils in Pandemonium, as they torture the understanding of man, here on earth, were at that period, just kindling to a flame in France; the curate of a village near Rouen, whose head was filled with the doctrines of Jansenius, and the Commentaries of the Abbot of St. Cyran, and of Arnauld, had persuaded two gentlemen of his parish, that these disputes were the most important of all human concerns, and those two disciples communicated their own convictions to both the Pascals, father and son. From the moment when the mind of the latter was turned into this course, he abandoned all his fomer objects of inquiry, and devoted himself exclusively to what he thought the one thing needful, the study of religion, or rather, of religious disputation. [*To be Continued.*]

The following Address to the Ladies of Great Britain, can do no disservice to those of any other Country.

TO you, my fair countrywomen, I address myself, and lay before you a view of your [illegible] duty, and the part you ought to act. It is with reluctance and grief I accuse you, and the more because my accusation is but too just; for it is certain, that no small part of the national guilt is to be charged to your account. It is by no means to be denied, that in this gay and voluptuous age many of you have given yourselves up a great deal too much to the heightened pleasures of theatrical and musical entertainments, to the neglect not only of all that is spiritual and sacred, but also of those domestic cares which are your proper province. The unavoidable effect of a constant pursuit of the most innocent of these public diversions, must be entirely to pervert your minds from what is the only natural sphere of womankind, and what you were originally intended for by the ordination of heaven; for I will not stick to tell the proudest beauty that shines in the front box, or in Ranelagh's gay alcove, bedecked in all the guady plumage that female vanity can contrive to put together, that she was originally formed for the plain and homely, but necessary and endearing characters of a wife and mother; and that all the various ornaments of pride which fill her fantastic brain, and disfigure the native beauties of her person, and all the giddy hours she passes in a round of guilty follies, falsely called pleasure and diversions, tend only to make her more and more unfit for what nature designed her. For believe me, my dear countrywomen, whenever you aim at any thing else than to be dutiful daughters, loving wives, tender mothers, prudent mistresses of families, faithful friends, and pious christians, you aim at something that is quite out of nature, and set aside the intention of heaven in making you rational creatures—Will Vauxhall improve you in œconomy or frugality? or Ranelagh in the domestic arts that make families happy? Can you pretend that the sight of gorgeous dresses, gaudy paintings, the strains of melting music, &c. have any other effect upon you, than to fill your minds with a thousand romantic wishes and desires, altogether inconsistent with your station, and above your rank in life, and to make your homes dull and tiresome to you? If it be certain that your fortune chiefly depends upon your being well settled in marriage; and if it be certain that at this very time, what chiefly deters the youth from entering into the marriage state, is the excessive love of idleness, dress, and public diversion, they observe in the ladies, to which very few incomes are equal? If these things be certain and indisputable, methinks your interest alone, and the desire of being agreeable to the other sex, if there were no other motive, ought to influence you greatly, and put you upon correcting your conduct. I assure you, however our sex may flatter you in your present taste for pleasure, there are few of them such fools as not to know what a fine lady who delights in gadding abroad in pursuit of pleasure, and when she stays at home in having her house crowded with idle visitors, and who is too polite to lend a hand to promote her husband's business, or to mind her own domestic cares, is not in the least fit for being a wife, but instead of being a helpmate for a man, is rather like to be a clog and incumbrance upon his affairs.

From what I have said of the faults of your conduct, my dear country-women, you may plainly see what is in your power to do towards the general reformation, to wit, to correct those faults. It is in your power to lighten your country of all that part of the national guilt which your bad conduct has brought upon it. It is even in your power to do a great deal towards reforming the other sex. If you will resolve to retrench your extravagancies, to employ your time at home in the works of domestic œconomy, charity, virtue, and piety, and in filling up the place you hold

with regard to your friends, your relations, and your God, you will contribute what is properly in your power toward the reformation, and consequently the saving of your unhappy country.

LITERARY NOTICES,

[Of English Publications.]

We observe in a late English Magazine the following Prospectus of a Review of Books, on a new plan, adapted to general utility. To commence with the year 1805, and to be continued Monthly, price one shilling and sixpence, and called the ECLECTIC REVIEW.

"Cicero gives us an account of the various opinions of philosophers in his age: But he himself was of the ECLECTIC sect, and chose out of each of them, such positions, as, in his judgment, came nearest to the truth."

Watts on the Improvement of the Mind.

Reviews have gradually increased in number, magnitude and price; and competion has naturally prompted to exertion. The Eclectic Review is projected, not with a wish to augment the number of works on criticism, nor with a presumption of surpassing all its predecessors in literary merit; but with the hope of rendering essential service to the most valuable interests of the public. To blend with impartial criticism an invariable regard to moral and religious principle, is its leading object; and with a view to more extensive usefulness, it will pursue a different track from that in which Reviews have hitherto been conducted. Compositions of this description have usually undertaken to characterize every production of the press; and the profession is still reiterated, although its futility has long since been demonstrated by experience. The Eclectic Review declines to attempt what cannot be accomplished. It proposes, therefore, to *select* those departments of literature which are most generally interesting and instructive; and to take proper notice of all new works on the subjects thus selected. On other topics, whether of science or amusement, those writings will be distinguished, an account of which may be conducive to public utility. The more abstruse branches of criticism, to which indeed, justice could be rendered only by a Review restricted to the purpose, will not be obtruded on our readers. The refuse of the circulating library, and of the theatre, will be excluded: while every vehicle of useful information and rational entertainment, under whatever form it appears, will receive appropriate attention.

On this plan, a Review is presented to the Public at a lower charge, than would be compatible with any attempt, however imperfect, at universal criticism; while greater justice may be done to the articles it comprises, than appears to be practicable on a more extended scale.

The editors have fully ascertained, that a Work of this description has long and earnestly been desired. They are aware also, that the public may reasonably demand an unequivocal avowal of the sentiments it is designed to inculcate. Without hesitation, therefore, they declare, that while they venerate, in all, the right of private conscience, they are themselves cordially attached to the doctrines of Christianity, as expressed in the Articles of the Church of England; and to the political principles of the British Constitution, as by law established. This ground, though happily the hereditary portion of every Briton, has not been chosen by them without the most serious enquiry, and mature deliberation: Satisfied, therefore, that it is tenable against every attack; they resolve, stedfastly, but temperately, to maintain it, from whatever quarter it may be assailed.

The subjects to which a stated and general attention will be paid, are History, natural, civil, and ecclesiastical; Biography, Geography, including voyages, travels, and topography; familiar Astronomy; Natural and Moral Philosophy; Theology, in all its branches; Education; General Politics, and Political Economy; Philology, chiefly with reference to the English language, and universal Grammar; and all cl[illegible] compo[illegible]n Poetry and Prose, [illegible]are r[illegible]ceptionable in their mora[illegible].

To these leading [illegible] be added, a copious list of B[illegible]rec[illegible] published in the British Island[illegible]erted from other countries; together with Intelligence of literary productions from various quarters of the globe, and of works preparing for the press. For this purpose, correspondence with persons of eminence, learning and character, in several foreign countries has been established.

A spirited literary undertaking is about to be commenced on a very extensive scale, under the title of Select Modern Classics. This work, which is intended to form a complete collection of the most distinguished productions of French, German, Italian, and other foreign writers, will be embellished with numerous engravings, and printed in a style of elegance similar to Sharp's British Classics. The translations contained in this collection will be entirely new, and the works of each writer will be accompanied with a biographical memoir and explanatory note. This selection will appear in periodical numbers, commencing with Zimmerman's celebrated work on Solitude, which will occupy two volumes. Singular as it may appear, this is the first English translation of that popular performance, that has ever been attempted from the language in which it was originally written.

The Memoirs of the Agricultural Society of Massachusetts, have just made their appearance. Among a variety of other things, they contain several essays on the cultivation of trees, and particularly peach-trees, from which the Americans distil the greater part of their ardent spirits; and on the means of obtaining plantations of peculiar trees, when the forests are cleared. This Society has presented a gold Medal to Colonel Humphreys, for having imported from Spain a flock of sheep of the Merino breed, the first which have been seen in the United States.

The Berlin journal announces the speedy publication of a volume of Poems, by a young man named Gottlieb Hiller. His parents are laboring people, and being himself employed from his infancy in rustic labors, he had scarcely an opportunity of learning to read and write. His time has of late years been divided between making bricks in summer, and mats in winter. A few volumes of Wieland's Works which he accidentally met with, first inspired him with a taste for poetry, which he is said to have cultivated with much success. He has published a specimen of his work, which possesses originality, and is not destitute of poetical merit. The celebrated Matthisson has not disdained to perform the duty of editor of this collection.

Seneca, the dramatic writer, predicated the discovery of America, in his Medea; and Tacitus foresaw the ruin of the Roman empire by the people of Germany.

Priestly and Ingenhouz have shown that plants sweeten corrupt air, but that this effect is produced by the operation of the sun, for that their effluvia in the night are noxious, and even poisonous. This fact, ascertained by experiment, is valuable; and should warn those who are fond of plants and flowers not to suffer them in their bed-chambers, as very serious illnesses may arise from thence.

*** The proprietor issues the first number of the MISCELLANY, under many disadvantages, which in future he hopes will be obviated—this will apologize for the small variety, and desultry arrangement, of the subjects it embraces.

☞ Gentlemen holding subscription papers are requested to continue them open, transmitting the names they may have received.

POETRY.

FOR THE MERRIMACK MISCELLANY.

Messrs. Editors,

If you think the following piece of original Poetry worthy a place, please to insert it.—It was written by a gentleman who may occasionally furnish you with the effusions of his muse.

ON THE SPRING.

FROM the stern grasp of winter freed,
Adorn'd with sweetly fragrant flowers,
SPRING's lovely genius oer the mead,
Now seeks again her shady bowers.

The birds loud warbling on the spray,
Proclaim with joy her jocund reign;
The hills re-echo to the lay,
And soften'd verdure decks the plain.

No more the wintry gusts deform
The face of smiling Nature round;
Hush'd is the howling of the storm,
And still the wind's hoarse murmuring sound.

The peasant from his calm retrear
Beholds the year its joys resume,
Rejoices Spring's approach to greet,
And soon forgets the wintry gloom.

At dawn he wakes to cheerful toil,
While round the merry Robbin sings,
And as he turns the fertile soil,
Arous'd the startled coney springs.

The stream again soft murmuring flows,
Or foams adown its pebbly bed,
The wild flower on the margin blows,
And violets raise their purple head.

Far from the town's tumultuous noise,
I tune the rustic Muses lyre,
Enraptur'd share the rural joys,
And sransports which those joys inspire.

Almighty Power! thou source divine,
From whence these tranquil pleasures flow,
Smile on the suppliant at thy shrine,
And all thy boundless gifts bestow.

Yet 'tis not wealth nor power I crave,
Contented with my humble store,
Still guide me o'er life's troubled wave,
Bless'd with thy love—I ask no more.

May 20, 1805. ANGUS.

Dr. Darwin, the poet and philosopher, was of St. John's College, (Eng.) and deserved a place among the Cambridge poets. The following lines, written in his Loves of the plants, by a Cantab, may be placed not unaptly here. Cupid speak;

"Teeming with Nature's living fires,
I bid thee welcome, genial spring,
While Fancy wakes her thousand lyres,
And woods and vales responsive ring,

She comes—lo! WINTER scowls away:
Harmonious forms start forth to view;
Nymphs tripping light in circles gay,
Deck'd in their robes of virgin hue.

Then I, on am'rous sportings bent,
Like a sly archer take my stand;
Wide thro' the world my shafts are sent,
And ev'ry creature owns my hand.

First man, the lord of all below,
A captive sinks beneath my dart;
And lovely woman, fram'd to glow,
Yields the dominion of the heart!

Thro' sea and earth, and boundless sky,
The fond subjection all must prove,
Whether they swim the stream, or fly,
Or mountain, vale, or forest rove.

Nor less the garden's sweet domain,
The mossy health, and verdant mead,
The tow'ring hill, the level plain,
And fields, with blooming life o'erspread.

The following little jeu d'esprit, allusive to the manner in which *Boydell* secured immortality to his name, has some point:

ON ALDERMAN BOYDELL'S SHAKESPEARE.

Old Father Time, as Ovid sings,
Is a great eater up of things;
And without salt or mustard,
Will gulp you down a castle-wall,
As clean, as ever at Guildhall
An alderman ate custard,

But BOYDELL, careful of his fame,
By grafting it on Shakespeare's name,
Shall beat his neighbors hollow:
For, to the Bard of Avon's stream,
Old time has said (like Polypheme,)
"You'll be the last I swallow."

JEU D'ESPRIT.

"How can you, my Lord, prefer *punch* to *wine?*" "Because, my dear, it is so like *matrimony*—such a charming compound of opposite qualities."—"Ah, my Lord, I am the *weak* part, I suppose."—"No, my love, you are the *sweet*, with a dash of the *acid*, and no small portion of the *spirit*."

FROM LEWIS'S COMIC SKETCHES.

Although performers, neglecting the study of their profession, deserve reprehension, yet I must exempt such from censure as have been neglectful from their endeavors proving unsuccessful. In this situation was the late facetious George Alexander Stevens, at Lynn, in Norfolk. Having played three several nights to empty benches, he neglected to study the part of Lorenzo, in the Merchant of Venice, which he had to perform before the company left town. He, however, bustled through it tolerably well, until he came to the last act, where he should have said to Jessica

"In such a night as this, Leander swam the Hellespont, and braved the winds and waves for Hero's sake," &c.

Instead of which he began thus:

"Oh Jessica! in such a night as this, the—man—swam over the water—and he div'd and he duck'd—and he duck'd and he div'd—till he got to the other side—and—there, you know, he met with his—sweetheart—and there, Jessica, you know they met each other."

This was intolerable! The audience perceiving the cause, expressed their disapprobation by a general hiss from every part of the theatre

Stevens, greatly irritated by this resolved to quit the town, as he termed it, in a blaze. He took therefore, Jessica by the hand, and leading her forward addressed the audience thus,

"O Jessica! in such a night as this, we came to town,
And since that night we've touch'd but half a crown;
Let you and I then, bid these folks good night,
For if we longer stay, they'll starve us quite:
D——me!"

One of those *famed Literati*, a country sculptor, was ordered to engrave on a tomb stone, the following words:

"*A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.*"

But the stone being small, he engraved on it

"*A virtuous woman is 6/7 to her husband.*"

MARRIED,

In this town, JOSEPH DANA, Esq. to Miss LUCY TEMPLE.

Mr. SAMUEL ALLYNE OTIS, merchant, to Miss ELIZABETH COFFIN MARQUAND.

OBITUARY NOTICE.

IT rarely constitutes a part of our duty so painful as to be constrained to record the death of Mr. ROBERT L. MURRAY.——This gentleman had, with his friend and brother, Mr. HOWARD, sailed down the river, with a pleasant breeze, and every prospect of rational enjoyment; but, on their return, so fleeting are the most qualified enjoyments of this life, an envious squall, suddenly struck the boat, and engulphed him in a few moments in an unrelenting grave.

To those who knew the merits of Mr. MURRAY, it would be needless to offer eulogium—a bereaved mother, an affectionate sister, and afflicted brothers—can receive but very partial consolation from the testimony of universal grief, that pervades all classes of his acquaintance:—but a respect for his memory impels us to say, that from his filial and fraternal attentions—from his manners as a gentleman and companion, and his deportment as a citizen—few instances of the instability of life have occurred in our circle, that have been so much the subject of just and general regret.

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